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IDENTIFIERS	National Association Secondary School Principals; National Education Association

ABSTRACT

This booklet is intended to help teachers and principals examine their roles, responsibilities, and relationships to create a quality instructional program at the school site. It consists of guidelines intended to foster a positive school environment; to encourage and facilitate discussion, collegiality, and mutual professional respect; and to broaden the common interests of teachers and principals. By offering school professionals a means of measuring the distance between what their school is now and what it is capable of becoming, the guidelines provide the opportunity to develop a blueprint for self-improvement and a design for greater organizational effectiveness. Descriptions of "model practices" or "the evidence of success" common in effective schools are categorized into the folowing sections: "Successful Secondary Schools: The Cooperative Model"; "School Goals and Purposes"; "School Organization and Climate"; "Classroom Instruction"; "Supervision/Evaluation/Personnel"; "Student Learning and Behavior"; and "Family and Community Relationships." Appendices include names of NEA/NASSP task force members and contacts for the "Ventures" project. (IW)

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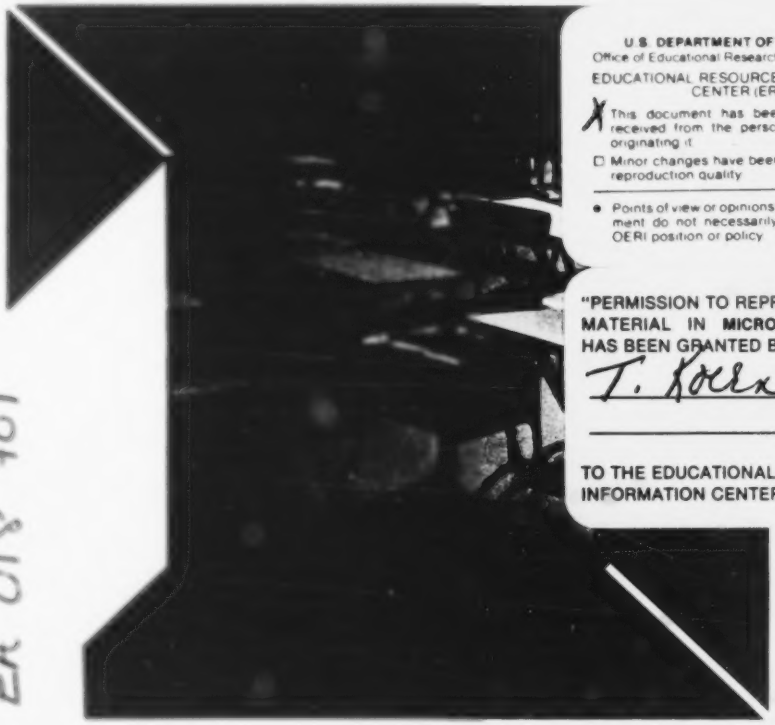
VENTURES IN GOOD SCHOOLING

A Cooperative Model for a Successful Secondary School



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nea/nassp *Developed jointly by the National Education Association and the National Association of Secondary School Principals*

"This document rests on a joint NEA/NASSP commitment to improve instructional programs through facilitating collegiality, encouraging professional respect, and broadening the common interests of teachers and principals."

Dear Colleagues,

The bond that unites teachers and principals is their shared dedication to the ideal of excellence in every school and quality education for every student. Achieving this goal never was — and never will be — easy. But it *is* possible when teachers and principals work together in a spirit of collegiality, with mutual respect and mutual understanding of their respective professional responsibilities.

If our schools are to become paradigms of effectiveness, teachers and principals must accept joint responsibility for designing a collaborative school, a school in which the professional autonomy of teachers and the managerial authority of principals are harmonized.

The NEA and NASSP understand that meeting the challenge of improving our schools requires rethinking and revising the traditional teacher/principal relationship. The "democratic leadership" model of school organization that graduate schools of education have taught since the early 1960s must be infused with new meaning. What must guide this transformation is the tenet, rooted in effective schools research, that the climate of the school site is the critical determinant of educational quality.

We are proud that our two national organizations are partners in this project. And we invite your active participation in this venture.

Scott D. Thomson

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Executive Director
National Association
of Secondary School Principals

Don Cameron

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INTRODUCTION

The National Education Association and the National Association of Secondary School Principals share the conviction that present circumstances demand a renewed sense of interdependence among all educators. The time is right for teachers and principals to strengthen their professional partnership at the school site, to tighten the bonds that unite them in common cause. The national imperative for high-quality education demands professional commitment to a high-quality relationship between teachers and principals. Last year, in an effort to forward this goal, the national leadership of the NEA and NASSP appointed a joint committee to develop a cooperative model for individual schools across the nation.

The learning environment for students is the school site. And the achievement of collegial working relationships among teachers and principals is a fundamental first step toward enhancing the quality of that environment for students.

The NASSP and NEA both are keenly aware of the difficulties inherent in this initiative to give greater emphasis to our mutual goals as a means of forwarding the quest for

quality education. Our two national associations candidly acknowledge that teachers and principals will continue to view certain issues from markedly divergent perspectives. We know that old wounds remain, that tensions persist. We do not, however, see any insurmountable barriers to a more mature, mutually beneficial accord. Developing this accord requires only that teachers and principals focus at least as much upon their common interests as upon their differing perspectives.

Building a Framework

Clearly, principals and teachers share the goal of providing students with the strongest possible educational program. We both desire a learning environment that enhances rather than inhibits student achievement. This common interest in good schooling must be encouraged and cultivated. The mutual interests of teachers and principals in no way require the abandonment of self-interest. What *is* required is a recognition ***that those interests intersect*** and that forwarding those interests demands a willingness to work together in a mutually supportive way.

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In the spring of 1985, NASSP and NEA leaders appointed a joint working committee of teachers and principals to develop a practical tool that would help teachers and principals examine their responsibilities to create a quality instructional program at the school site. The first meeting of the committee, convened in Washington, D.C.,* focused on two tasks:

- Reviewing the relationships between effective schooling and teacher/principal cooperation.
- Defining the major areas of school life that could benefit from cooperative action.

With the assistance of Professor Marshall Smith of the University of Wisconsin, an authority on "effective schools," the committee identified critical elements that shape relationships among professional staff members. The committee sought, not a comprehensive review of effective schooling research, but a research-based definition of teacher/principal relationships that help create a climate that enhances the effectiveness of all school professionals and thereby facilitates student growth and development.

*See Appendix A

In order to refine this definition and translate it into concrete, practical terms, the committee then divided the life of the school into the following six areas:

- Purpose and Goals of the School
- School Organization and Climate
- Classroom Instruction
- Supervision, Evaluation, and Personnel Development
- Student Achievement and Behavior
- Family and Community Relationships.

Once this framework was defined, the committee began identifying key characteristics that appear to generate effective cooperative action within each of these six areas.

Assumptions and Definitions

During the course of its work, the joint national committee formulated a number of assumptions and definitions that undergird the lists of descriptive — and proscriptive — characteristics. The assumptions/definitions:

- A growing body of research confirms the thesis that the focus of education reform efforts must be the individual school. For this reason, it is particularly important for

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principals and teachers to seek avenues for cooperative action at the school site.

- The *Ventures* document rests on a joint NEA/NASSP commitment to improve instructional programs through facilitating collegiality, encouraging mutual professional respect, and broadening the common interests of teachers and principals.
- The guidelines are intended to foster a positive school environment, to encourage and facilitate discussion within schools. They are not intended as an instrument for use in negotiations at the district or state level.
- The guidelines are not intended to challenge district or state policy; they must be applied in a manner consistent with these policies and mandates. *Ventures* is a school site document.
- Modern management theory mandates substantial decentralization of decision-making authority. The guidelines presuppose an enlightened management philosophy that gives substantial latitude and flexibility to individual schools.
- While final decisions remain the prerogative of management, enlightened organizations include staff

members in decision-making processes.

- This document — because of its focus on the instructional program — addresses the roles, responsibilities, and relationships of teachers and principals. The term *principal* in this document refers to all school site administrators, and the term *teacher* applies to all professional staff in a school.

Involvement of Affiliates

The joint national committee met for a second time in September 1985 to sharpen the initial draft document and to plan for feedback sessions from teachers and principals across the nation.

The committee made arrangements with five states (Alabama, Maine, North Carolina, Washington, and Wisconsin) to provide direct review by practicing teachers and principals.* Discussion guides and an introductory videotape were sent jointly to NASSP and NEA state affiliates. The state groups then convened joint teams of teachers and principals to consider all facets of the draft document and offer

**See Appendix B*

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recommendations to the national committee. Approximately 120 teachers and principals participated in these meetings. In addition, NASSP received advice from state officers attending two regional meetings, and NEA invited comments from participants at its national conference on "Better Education Through Decentralized Decision-Making."

To ensure a thorough understanding of the advice state groups offered, the committee conducted a conference call with teacher and principal representatives from all five participating states. In January 1986, the national committee revised the original *Ventures* document on the basis of reports from the state teams.

Summary

This booklet is the product of hours of discussion among teachers and principals representing our two associations. It presents their view of the optimum school environment for student learning and the optimum school environment for a positive and productive work life for teachers and principals.

Teachers and principals are partners in the school improvement process. Their mutual responsibilities and common obligations demand a concerted effort to forward the quest for educational excellence. *Ventures in Good Schooling* should prove valuable in pursuing this goal. The NEA and NASSP joint national committee wish you well in your efforts to make this goal a reality in your school.

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Suggestions For Users

Our hope is that *Ventures* will generate lively, candid, and productive dialogue among professional school staff. We envision a cooperative school-wide effort to determine whether or not *staff relationships* are conducive to forwarding shared goals for quality education. *Ventures*, most simply, offers school-based professionals a means of measuring the distance between what their school is now and what it is capable of becoming. It provides the opportunity to develop a blueprint for self-improvement, a design for greater organizational effectiveness.

It is not our intent to tell schools how best to use this document. That decision belongs, appropriately, to the personnel who work at the school site. We do believe, however, that a note of caution is advisable: The document must be approached in an atmosphere of trust. Unless there is a substantial consensus favoring the use of this document, unless teachers and principals jointly agree to focus on the common good rather than parochial self-interest, the process that *Ventures* is designed to facilitate will likely be subverted.

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Ventures is purposely designed to encourage school professionals to adapt it to their school's unique needs and preferences. One school may choose to set aside a half-day in-service program to discuss issues the document raises. Another school might appoint small committees, with each assigned the task of studying one section of *Ventures*, then issuing a report to the full staff. Still another might decide on a general discussion that is followed by the appointment of committees or study groups that will recommend changes in school policies and procedures. It may be approached section by section or in its entirety.

No one format is right for every school. Methodology is, therefore, a secondary concern. What is primary is the good faith effort to use *Ventures* to encourage all members of the professional staff to reflect on ways to improve collegiality and foster cooperation. We are confident that this process will lead to useful dialogue and, perhaps, to permanent positive change.

In the pages that follow, you will find descriptions of practices common in effective schools. Remember, however, that *Ventures* is intended to generate self-assessment, not self-criticism. The committee recognizes that few schools in the nation conform entirely to the "model practices" *Ventures* presents.

* * * * *

The NASSP and NEA remain committed to the principle that substantial decision-making authority at the school site is the essential prerequisite for quality education. It is in this spirit that we offer you this document. *Ventures* is descriptive — not prescriptive — in nature. Its purpose is not to impose mandates, but to elicit thoughtfulness. Our hope is that *Ventures* will encourage you to launch your own venture, and will serve as a catalyst for the collegial exchange of ideas that is the surest route to the revitalization of America's schools.

Some Basic Assumptions About Successful Schools

While the following statements are supported by a substantial body of research literature, they are validated and verified by the professional experiences of principals and teachers who work at the school site.

1. The improvement of education depends on decisions and actions at the school site. Policy guidelines from state and district officials provide a broad framework for the exercise of professional judgment by teachers and principals at the school site.
2. The quality of education depends on the cooperative, joint efforts of teachers and principals.
3. The staff of a good school develops and utilizes shared goals and high expectations for instructional outcomes.
4. The instructional practices of good schools are rooted in validated, applicable research.
5. The personnel of good schools are fully prepared, certificated, high quality professionals.
6. The teachers and principals of good schools perform their responsibilities in a manner consistent with the highest standards of professionalism.

7. The management of good schools reflects practices that motivate and encourage staff members to sustain and improve their professional skills.

8. The personnel and resources as well as the flexibility and independence of good schools are fully utilized to meet the unique needs of their students.

9. In good schools, teachers and principals assume the responsibility for improving the educational experiences of all students. They display initiative and make full use of their knowledge, experience, and authority.

10. In good schools, the channels of communication are open and clear. The professional staff members have ample opportunity to exchange ideas and insights.

11. Good schools recognize — and take into full account — the family and community factors affecting student performance.

The Evidence of Success:

In a successful secondary school, the principal and teachers cooperatively define — within policy guidelines — the expectations and outcomes sought by the school.

Indicators:

1. The principal provides the opportunity for the faculty to participate in identifying the purposes, priorities, and goals of the school.
2. The principal and teachers actively participate in activities organized to determine the purposes and priorities of the school.
3. The principal and teachers gather data about the school and effective educational practices to plan appropriate educational programs.
4. The principal involves the faculty in the decision-making process before decisions are finalized.
5. The principal communicates final decisions to teachers.
6. The principal and teachers develop strategies to implement decisions and evaluate results.

School Goals and Purposes

7. The goals and purposes of the school are reviewed and adopted annually, utilizing information on outcomes.

8. The goals and purposes of the schools are communicated to students, parents, and the community.

The Evidence of Success:

In a successful school, the principals and teachers work together to generate a strong sense of community and interdependence. They share a commitment to high expectations for themselves and their students, to instructional excellence, and to a climate of professionalism.

Indicators:

1. The principal and teachers create structures to ensure significant staff advice on school policies and operations.

2. The principal seeks teacher advice in developing policies, practices, and conditions that create a professional workplace for staff.

3. The principal and teachers work together to develop and establish conditions that enhance and support staff morale.

4. The principal seeks teacher advice on staffing needs and the selection of new staff.

5. The principal and teachers treat each other with respect and understanding.

6. The principal and teachers support one another in maintaining order and discipline. They recognize that a climate of civility enhances student achievement and staff morale.

7. The principal is visible and available to faculty and students, both formally and informally.

8. The principal schedules and conducts well-planned faculty meetings. All staff members feel comfortable about communicating openly in these meetings.

9. Teachers participate in faculty meetings and identify topics for discussion.

10. The principal and teachers jointly devise methods for recognizing student achievement.

11. The principal provides opportunities to acknowledge teacher excellence and achievement.

12. The principal communicates concerns regarding individual teachers directly and privately to those teachers.

13. The principal and teachers consider the evaluation of performance and other personnel matters as confidential and not for public comment.

14. The principal establishes appropriate expectations for support staff.

15. The principal and teachers develop structures for the recruitment, professional development, and retention of staff.

The Evidence of Success:

In a successful secondary school, the principal and teachers focus on strategies and procedures that promote effective classroom instruction.

Indicators:

1. The principal assumes leadership for improving the instructional program.
2. The principal and teachers make instructional effectiveness the highest priority in the school.
3. The principal and teachers collaboratively develop a school-wide plan for instructional improvement.
4. The principal provides ample opportunity for teachers to plan programs, to develop and refine the curriculum, and to meet and discuss program implementation.
5. Teachers use research-based strategies, techniques, and materials, and develop comprehensive strategies for reaching instructional objectives.
6. Teachers use instructional time to achieve instructional objectives.
7. Teachers participate in the budget process by identifying the resources necessary to reach instructional objectives.
8. The principal provides necessary resources for the instructional program within available budget.
9. Teachers inform the principal of all conditions affecting classroom instruction.

Classroom Instruction

10. The principal keeps classroom interruptions to a minimum and helps to resolve problems reported by teachers.

11. The principal demonstrates active interest in classroom events and activities.

12. The teacher informs the principal of significant classroom activities and student accomplishments.

13. The principal and teacher provide regular and frequent recognition of student achievement to reinforce the importance of learning.

14. Teachers monitor individual student achievement of course objectives and provide frequent feedback to students and timely information to parents.

15. The principal and teachers monitor and assess the academic achievement of students as it relates to the instructional goals of the school.

16. The principal and teachers devise and implement systems to evaluate program effectiveness.

17. The principal and teacher work together to establish effective professional development activities.

18. The principal encourages all teachers to attend educational conferences and other professional development activities.

19. The principal encourges staff to continue to experiment with classroom techniques, resources, and activities to achieve instructional goals.

The Evidence of Success:

Supervision in a successful secondary school includes formative assistance and summative evaluation plans that are jointly developed by the principal and teachers, consistent with district policy, and designed to maintain and improve the instructional program.

Indicators:

1. Teachers and principals fully understand the criteria upon which evaluations are based.

2. The evalution of teachers is based primarily, but not entirely, on the quality of classroom instruction.

3. The principal and other evaluators are adequately prepared to conduct teacher evaluation.

4. Strategies for implementing the procedure for evaluation are cooperatively developed by principals and teachers and consider the unique situations associated with individual teacher assignments.

5. Principals acquire information for the evaluation of instruction through classroom observation and other clearly defined criteria.

6. Following classroom observation, the principal shares perceptions and insights with the teacher.

7. Summative evaluations include a written report that is reviewed and discussed with the teacher in a confidential setting.

8. Teachers and principals develop expectations for performance in the classrooom and for professional behavior on campus.

9. The principal seeks feedback from teachers about administrative performance.

10. Recommendations for the employment of teachers come from the school site.

11. The principal and teachers identify, structure, and implement effective staff development activities.

12. Professional development activities are related to the objectives and priorities of the school.

13. Professional accomplishment, length of service, and community contributions of teachers and principals are appropriately recognized.

The Evidence of Success:

In a successful secondary school, the principal and teachers hold and convey high expectations for student achievement and student behavior.

Indicators:

1. The principal and teachers work together to design instructional programs that increase student attendance, discourage tardiness, and promote participation in learning.
2. The principal and teachers work together to define and enforce a fair and accurate grading policy.
3. Teachers evaluate student performance in a manner consistent with district policy.
4. The principal supports the teachers' evaluation of student performance within district policy.
5. The principal and teachers work to accommodate the learning styles of individual students.
6. Principals and teachers develop policies and procedures to encourage classroom attendance and discourage tardiness and absenteeism.
7. Classroom and school rules are designed to protect instructional time and to discourage disruptive behavior by students.

8. Teachers communicate a clear and concise summary of classroom expectations and rules.

9. The principal and teachers cooperate to enforce rules consistently and fairly.

10. The principal monitors school attendance patterns and dropout rates with teachers to assist in developing school programs that improve school attendance.

11. The principal communicates a clear and concise summary of school expectations and rules to students and community.

12. The principal and teachers cooperate in creating and monitoring an orderly and safe environment.

13. The professional staff gives thorough consideration to family and student views when developing school rules and regulations.

14. Principals and teachers foster student self-reliance and self-discipline by providing opportunities for them to assume responsibility.

15. The principal and teachers plan and support student activities that develop maturity and responsiblity.

The Evidence of Success:

In good secondary schools, the principal and teachers develop and maintain a variety of cooperative links with the community. Family and community involvement and support complement the efforts of the school.

Indicators:

1. The school and family work together to encourage high student achievement.
2. Principals and teachers encourage families to provide good learning conditions in the home and to limit student employment and other competing demands.
3. Families are encouraged to discuss progress reports with the professional staff.
4. Professional staff identify community resources that support the instructional program.
5. Community organizations encourage and recognize student and faculty achievement in all areas of the school program.
6. Principals and teachers recognize and acknowledge significant community efforts that support the school program.

Family and Community Relationships

7. Schools take the initiative to inform the community of student and faculty activities and accomplishments.

8. The staff develops procedures that allow parents and interested citizens to observe the school and to feel welcome.

9. Principals and teachers utilize opportunities provided by the private sector to develop professional skills.

10. The principal provides staff with a convenient place and time in the school for confidential teacher-parent conferences and telephone contact.

11. School staff seeks to establish and maintain positive working relationships with the media.

12. The physical plant of the school reflects the pride and support of the community.

13. The school provides a mechanism for responding to parental and community inquiries throughout the calendar year.

14. The principal and teachers support student and parent-teacher activities as well as other appropriate school and community events.

Appendix A

NEA/NASSP Task Force Members

Darlene Frazier, teacher, Boone Junior-Senior High School, Boone, Iowa

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Appendix B

NASSP/NEA Contacts for "Ventures" Project

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Mr. Andy Reese Executive Secretary Division of Principals North Carolina Association of Educators	Mr. K.Z. Chavis Executive Secretary North Carolina Association of Educators
Mr. Charles E. Talmage Executive Director Association of Washington School Principals	Ms. Terry Bergeson President Washington Education Association
Mr. Charles R. Hilmon Executive Director Association of Wisconsin Schools Administrators Council	Mr. Morris Andrews Executive Director Wisconsin Education Association Council

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August 1986

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